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COMMANDERS DIGEST

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Grim Reminder Of POW's

Exhibit In Nation's Capitol Shows Enemy's Inhumane Treatment

A life-like figure sitting in the corner of a bare cell is one of the principal displays of the Prisoner of War Exhibit on the ground floor at the center of the Capitol Building, Washington, D.C. This realistic presentation was conceived and financed by Mr. H. Ross Perot, a Texas businessman, to arouse public support for the release of American prisoners held in Southeast Asia.

A grim reminder of the plight of Americans held prisoner by the enemy in Southeast Asia was unveiled on Capitol Hill June 4.

Congressional dignitaries, civic leaders, wives, parents and relatives were present for the ceremonies held in the Capitol Crypt Room.

The location of the Prisoner of War Exhibit, directly beneath the Capitol Rotunda, was selected after both Speaker of the House John W. McCormack (D-Mass.) and Senator B. Everett Jordan (D-N.C.), Chairman of the Senate Rules Committee, gave their permission for the display, scheduled to continue through the summer months.

The exhibit is a portrayal of the suffering and indignities endured by American prisoners at the hand of the enemy.

Exhibited are bamboo cages, cement cells, earthen holes and the gaunt, sick, half-starved captives who must endure and live in this atmosphere.

Representative Clement J. Zablocki

(Continued On Page Two)

Enemy Fails To Comply With Geneva Humanitarian Standards

The history of prisoners of war has been a difficult one at best, said Mr. Richard G. Capen Jr., as he reviewed major efforts toward international agreement on treatment of prisoners, dating to 1864.

In remarks before the Council on Foreign Relations, Inc., in New York, the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Legislative Affairs noted that in the 1950s, South Vietnam and North Vietnam were signatories to the Geneva Convention of 1949. He listed the humanitarian standards set forth in that Convention.

He then commented, "Have the basic, elementary humanitarian standards outlined in the Geneva Convention been applied to the American POW's held by the North Vietnamese, the Viet Cong and the Pathet Lao? The record speaks for itself."

A review of early efforts toward international agreement on

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Exhibit In Nation's Capitol Shows Enemy's Inhumane Treatment

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(D-Wis.) suggested the display to Speaker McCormack and Senator Jordan and acted as Master of Ceremonies at the unveiling.

In his remarks Speaker McCormack observed: "They tell me that the American people are apathetic. I do not for a moment believe it. I do not believe that the thousands of visitors to the Capitol from all across our great land, who will see this exhibit, will remain unaffected."

He said he hoped, that in some small way, the exhibit and its impact will help hasten relief to the prisoners and perhaps contribute indirectly to their release.

"If only one American military man is able to come home, even one hour sooner . . . then we are all more than amply repaid," he said.

Congressman Zablocki noted that Congress has held several hearings on the prisoner of war situation and said that in no past war have American fighting men been forced to endure captivity so harsh in its physical and mental demands.

"The full nature of Hanoi's unjustifiable and illegal act against American prisoners," he said, "should be understood by all of us. It is my hope that this display of replicas will help inform our people of the cruel realities."

The Honorable G. Warren Nutter, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, and Chairman of the Department of Defense Prisoner of War Policy Committee, said that the grim display made words superfluous. He added: "We must redouble our resolve to bring the men home as soon as possible."

The person responsible for placing the exhibit is H. Ross Perot, a Texas businessman, who challenged the North Vietnamese to point out anything about the exhibit that is not absolutely accurate and then prove their point by letting the world see how the men are being treated.

(Mr. Nutter, on behalf of the Department of Defense, extended sincere thanks to the Congress "for making possible this quite unprecedented display in the Nation's Capitol." He added, "We also are grateful to Mr. Perot for his energy and imagination in proposing and arranging for the placement of these models.")

He is an American. He is one of the more than 1,500 U.S. servicemen missing in action in Southeast Asia. He needs your help.

THESE MEN ARE OF NO MILITARY VALUE TO THEIR CAPTORS! THEIR FAMILIES NEED THEM AT HOME!

North Vietnam says the POW's are being treated humanely. If this is true, why does Hanoi continue to refuse inspection of POW facilities by neutral groups? What does Hanoi have to hide? Why do they refuse to abide by the Geneva Convention which they signed in 1957?

Until Hanoi opens the camps to inspection, allows a free flow of mail and makes full disclosure about the men they hold in Southeast Asia, is there anything to prove they are the humanitarians they claim to be?

Mr. Perot has talked to numerous prisoners who have been released or escaped captivity. He said there was always that "first" question he asked them: "How did you stay alive?"

The answer invariably is: A deep sense of religious conviction; the memories of families; a great love for country, and finally a strong belief that in our country we would do everything possible to get them out.

The key to the release of the men, Mr. Perot believes, is an aroused America on the prisoner of war issue. He has said before that an incensed America on the prisoner of war issue "is a language Hanoi understands" and sees constant pressure and publicity as the key to success and eventual fair and humane treatment required by the Geneva Convention.

The Congressional Record has increasingly taken note of the prisoner of war issue as Representatives and Senators alike make their views known. Following are excerpts of those views extracted from the Congressional Record:

Senator Mark O. Hatfield (R-Ore.) stressed that freedom for war prisoners must have top priority; that the Administration must make every effort to win their release and the members of the

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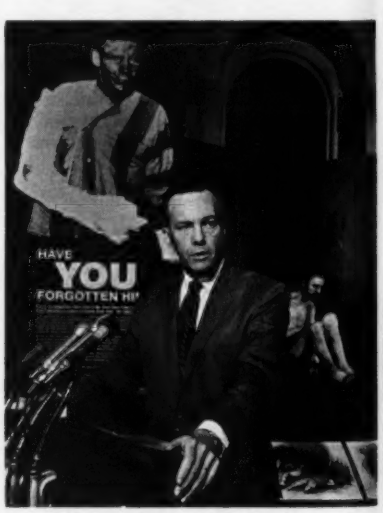

Dr. G. Warren Nutter, Assistant Secretary of Defense (International Security Affairs), speaks at opening of the Prisoner of War Exhibit in the Nation's Capitol.

COMMANDERS DIGEST

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Senate must support the effort and back it to the fullest possible extent.[1]

Senator Bob J. Dole (R-Kan.) said: "If there is any issue in our Nation today that transcends all differences, it is the treatment accorded captured U.S. servicemen." [2]

Senator Robert P. Griffin (R-Mich.) said we must continue to exert every effort in behalf of the men who are held prisoners of war by North Vietnam. He feels the best way to do this is to gather world opinion against the North Vietnamese.[3]

Senator Russell B. Long (D-La.) said that among the "uncounted acts of savagery" committed by the Communists in Indochina, "the treatment of prisoners of war ranks among the most repugnant to world opinion and to simple humanity." He urged members of Congress and concerned citizens to join the families of POW's in demanding justice and fair treatment.[4]

Representative Burt L. Talcott (R-Calif.) urged everyone to join the President, their Governor, Red Cross and fellow citizens in helping to arouse the conscience of humanity on behalf of the prisoners of war.[5]

Representative William J. Scherle (R-Iowa) asked: "How long?" will Communist North Vietnam sadistically practice spiritual and mental genocide on over 1,500 American prisoners of war and their families.[6]

Another of the major displays in the POW Exhibit at the Capitol is this life-like figure shackled in a bamboo cage. The exhibit is open to the public. It will be shown throughout most of the summer months. (DoD Photos)

[1] *Congressional Record No. 87, Pages S7941-7942.*
[2] *Congressional Record No. 87, Pages 7954-7956.*
[3] *Congressional Record No. 89, Pages S8131-8132.*
[4] *Congressional Record No. 87 Part II, Page E4838.*
[5] *Congressional Record No. 89, Pages H4989-4993.*
[6] *Congressional Record No. 89, Pages E5046-E5071.*

Enemy Fails To Comply With Geneva Humanitarian Standards

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treatment of prisoners, provisions of the Geneva Convention and the inhumane treatment of American prisoners today highlight continuing portions of Mr. Capen's address.

The history of prisoners of war has been a difficult one at best. The plight of American prisoners of war in Southeast Asia has been no exception. I would like to review briefly some of the major efforts toward international agreement on treatment of prisoners. The so-called "Lieber Code" which emanated from the Civil War was of signal importance because it was the first codified statement of international law relating to POW's. That "Code" set the stage for later considerable activity on the international level on behalf of POW's during the latter part of the 19th century.

One of the first was an international conference held in Geneva in 1864 related to improving conditions of the wounded during wars. The work of this conference was largely the result of the efforts of Henri Dunant, whose work also led to the founding of the International Red Cross.

Czar Alexander II of Russia called a conference in Brussels in July 1874, reportedly inspired by the Lieber Code. The Brussels Conference set the stage for the more familiar Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907, which laid the basis for the Geneva Conventions of 1929 and finally the 1949 Geneva Convention relative to the Treatment of Prisoners of War.

At the outbreak of hostilities in Korea, none of the belligerents had ratified the Geneva Convention of 1949. However, by July 1950 the United States, the Republic of Korea and the Government of North Korea had agreed to follow the principles of the 1949 Geneva Convention. Regrettably, the North Koreans did not live up to their promise. There were approximately 7,200 American POW's in Korea and of this number at least 2,730 died while in captivity (approximately a 39 per cent death rate).

The North Koreans were particularly wanton in their cruelty toward prisoners. "Paks Palace," an interrogation center near Pyonyang, and "Death Valley" near Pukchin, are names that

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President Gives Report On Cambodian Operations

President Nixon gave a progress report June 3 on American participation with South Vietnamese forces in Cambodia stating, "this has been the most successful operation of this long and very difficult war."

After discussions with Secretary of Defense Melvin Laird, General Creighton Abrams and other senior advisors, the President reported that "all our major military objectives have been achieved."

President Nixon reviewed for a nationwide television audience the decision for Cambodian operations, objectives and prospects for achieving the objectives.

Showing a film of some of the war material captured, the President said, "In the month of May, in Cambodia alone, we captured a total amount of enemy arms, equipment, ammunition and food nearly equal to what we captured in all of Vietnam in all of last year."

He added, "With the rainy season now beginning, it will take the enemy months to rebuild its shattered installations and to replace the equipment we have captured or destroyed."

Here are additional highlights of President Nixon's remarks:

One month ago, I announced a decision ordering American participation with South Vietnamese forces in a series of operations against Communist-occupied areas in Cambodia which have been used for five years as bases for attacks on our forces in South Vietnam.

You will recall that on April 20, I announced the withdrawal of an additional 150,000 American troops from Vietnam within a year—which will bring the total number withdrawn, since I have taken office, to 260,000. I also reaffirmed on that occasion our proposals for a negotiated peace.

At the time of this announcement I warned that if the enemy tried to take advantage of our withdrawal program by increased attacks in Cambodia, Laos, or South Vietnam in a way that endangered the lives of our men remaining in South Vietnam, that I would, in my capacity as Commander-in-Chief of our Armed Forces, take strong action to deal with that threat.

Between April 20 and April 30, Communist forces launched a series of attacks against a number of key cities in neutral Cambodia. Their objective was unmistakable—to link together bases they had maintained in Cambodia for five years in violation of Cambodian neutrality. The entire 600-mile Cambodian-South Vietnam border would then have become one continuous hostile territory from which to launch assaults upon American and allied forces.

This posed an unacceptable threat to our remaining forces in South Vietnam. It would have meant higher casualties. It would have jeopardized our program for troop withdrawals. It would have meant a longer war. And—carried out in the face of an explicit warning from this Government—failure to deal with the enemy action would have eroded the credibility of the United States before the entire world.

After very intensive consultations with my top advisors, I directed that American troops join the South Vietnamese in destroying these major enemy bases along the Cambodian frontier. I said when I made this announcement: *"Our purpose is not to occupy these areas. Once the enemy forces are driven out of the sanctuaries and once their supplies are destroyed, we will withdraw."*

That pledge is being kept. I said further on that occasion, *"We take this action not for the purpose of expanding the war in Cambodia, but for the purpose of ending the war in Vietnam."* That purpose is being advanced.

As of today I can report that all of our major military objectives have been achieved. Forty-three thousand South Vietnamese took part in these operations, along with 31,000 Americans. Our combined forces have moved with greater speed and success than we had planned; we have captured and destroyed far more in war material than we anticipated; and American and allied casualties have been far lower than we expected.

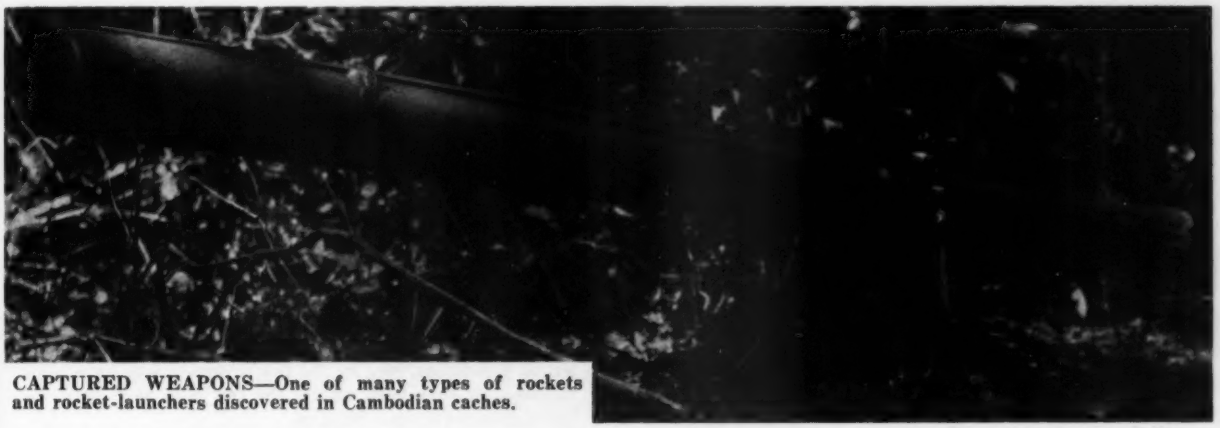
The success of these operations to date has guaranteed that the June 30 deadline I set for withdrawal of all American forces from Cambodia will be met . . .

The only remaining American activity in Cambodia after July 1 will be air missions to interdict the movement of enemy troops and material where I find that is necessary to protect the lives and security of our men in South Vietnam.

Our discussions with the South Vietnamese government indicate that their primary objective remains the security of South Vietnam, and that their activity in Cambodia in the future—after their withdrawal from the sanctuaries—will be determined by the actions of the enemy in Cambodia.

When this operation was announced, the critics charged that it would increase American casualties, that it would widen the war, that it would lengthen our involvement, that it might postpone troop withdrawals. But the operation was under-

CAMBODIAN CACHES—Part of six crates of carbines uncovered by the U.S. and ARVN in Cambodia. The weapons are of Chinese manufacture.



CAPTURED WEAPONS—One of many types of rockets and rocket-launchers discovered in Cambodian caches.

taken for precisely the opposite reasons—and it has had precisely the opposite effect.

Let us examine the long-range impact of this operation.

First, we have eliminated an immediate danger to the security of the remaining Americans in Vietnam, and thereby reduced our future casualties. Seizing these weapons and ammunition will save American lives. Because of this operation, American soldiers who might not otherwise be ever coming home, will now be coming home.

Second, we have won precious time for the South Vietnamese to train and prepare themselves to carry the burden of their national defense, so that our American forces can be withdrawn.

From General Abrams' reports and from our advisors in the field, one of the most dramatic and heartening developments of the operation has been the splendid performance of the South Vietnamese army. Sixty per cent of all the troops involved in the Cambodian operations were South Vietnamese. The effectiveness, the skill, the valor with which they fought far exceeded our expectations. Confidence and morale in the South Vietnamese army has been greatly bolstered. This operation has clearly demonstrated that our Vietnamization program is succeeding.

Third, we have insured the continuance and success of our troop withdrawal program. On April 20, I announced an additional 150,000 Americans would be home within a year. As a result of the success of the Cambodian operations, Secretary Laird has resumed the withdrawal of American forces from Vietnam. Fifty thousand of the 150,000 I announced on April 20 will now be out by Oct. 15.

As long as the war goes on, we can expect setbacks and some reversals. But, following the success of this effort, we can say now with confidence that we will keep our timetable for troop withdrawals.

Secretary of State William Rogers and I have been particularly encouraged by the resolve of 11 Asian countries at the Djakarta Conference to seek a solution to the problem of Cambodia. Cambodia offers an opportunity for these 11 nations, as well as other countries of the area, to cooperate in supporting the Cambodian government's efforts to maintain Cambodian neutrality, independence and territorial integrity. We shall do what we can to make it possible for these Asian initiatives to succeed.

To the North Vietnamese tonight I say again—the door to a negotiated peace remains wide open. Every offer we have made at the conference table, publicly or privately, I herewith reaffirm. We are ready to negotiate, whenever they are ready to negotiate.

However, if their answer to our troop withdrawal program, and to our offer to negotiate, is to increase their attacks in a way that jeopardizes the safety to our remaining forces in Vietnam, I shall, as my action five weeks ago clearly demonstrated, take strong and effective measures to deal with that situation.

With this announcement tonight, we have kept the pledge I made when I ordered this operation, that we would withdraw from Cambodia on a scheduled timetable—just as this Administration has kept every pledge it has made to the American people regarding the war in Vietnam and the return of American troops.

Let us look at the record.

In June of 1969 I pledged a withdrawal of 25,000 troops. They came home. In September of the same year I said I would bring home an additional 35,000. They came home. In December I said an additional 50,000 Americans were coming out of Vietnam. They, too, have come home.

There is one commitment yet to be fulfilled. I have pledged to end this war. I shall keep that promise. But I am determined to end the war in a way that will promote peace rather than conflict throughout the world. I am determined to end it in a way that will bring an era of reconciliation to our people—and not an era of furious recrimination.

In seeking peace, let us remember that at this time only this Administration can end this war and bring peace. We have a program for peace—and the greater the support the Administration receives in its efforts, the greater the opportunity to win that just peace we all desire.

Peace is the goal that unites us. Peace is the goal toward which we are working. Peace is the goal this government will pursue until the day that we reach it.

Enemy Fails To Comply With Geneva Humanitarian Standards

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will live in infamy in the history of POW's and in the memory of those Americans who survived their horrors. They followed a policy of interrogation, inculcation of Communist doctrine, and the use of prisoners for propaganda purposes. The term "brainwashing," and so-called "confessions of war crimes" date back to the Korean War and Communist exploitation of POW's.

In the 1950s, South Vietnam and North Vietnam also ratified the Geneva Convention of 1949. The humanitarian standards set forth in that Convention are quite clear:

—*The Convention provides for the immediate release of sick and injured prisoners. Article 109 states that, parties to the conflict are bound to send back to their own country, regardless of number or rank, seriously wounded and seriously sick prisoners of war, after having cared for them until they are fit to travel."*

—*The Convention provides for correspondence between POW's and members of their families, relatives and friends. Article 71 states that, "Prisoners of war shall be allowed to send and receive letters and cards. If the Detaining Power deems it necessary to limit the number of letters and cards sent by each prisoner of war, the said number shall not be less than two letters and four cards monthly."*

—*The Convention provides for the immediate identification of POW's and transmission of this information to the nation concerned. Article 122 states that, "Upon the outbreak of a conflict and in all cases of occupation, each of the Parties to the conflict shall institute an official Information Bureau for prisoners of war who are in its power. . . . The Bureau shall immediately forward such information by the most rapid means to the Powers concerned. . . . This information shall make it possible quickly to advise the next of kin concerned."*

—*The Convention provides for inspection of POW camps by impartial observers. Article 126 of the Convention states that, "Representatives or delegates of the Protecting Powers shall have permission to go to all places where prisoners of war may be, particularly to places of internment, imprisonment and labour, and shall have access to all premises occupied by prisoners of war."*

Have the basic, elementary humanitarian standards outlined in the Geneva Convention been applied to the American POW's held by the North Vietnamese, the Viet Cong and the Pathet Lao? The record speaks for itself.

- The Communists have refused to release the sick and wounded. Many of the men captured or missing in action are pilots with serious injuries incurred when they were shot down. No one knows how many of these men have died or are dying from their injuries and lack of proper medical treatment; perhaps no one will ever know.
- The Communists have refused to allow a reasonable level of correspondence or delivery of packages to the POW's. The trickle of letters from POW's has been small and unpredictable. When letters do come through, they are often so rigidly censored on a flimsy form providing little significant information as to how the POW really is. Fewer than 250 POW's have been permitted to write to their loved ones during the past five years. The average is about two letters a year.
- The enemy has refused to identify the prisoners they hold. As a result more than 1,500 U.S. servicemen in Vietnam are listed as prisoners of war or missing in action. The large majority—over 1,000—are missing because the enemy has refused to release any names of the men whom they hold. The remaining 450 are listed as prisoners of war. Those prisoner determinations have not been made as a result of any official compilation by the enemy, but are because they have been seen in propaganda films, heard on propaganda broadcasts, seen by the few prisoners who have been released, or have been among the few who have been allowed to write to their families.
- Hundreds of wives, children, and parents do not know whether their loved ones are dead or alive. Some men have been prisoners or missing for more than five years, 150 have been missing or captured for more than four years, and more than 300 men have been prisoners or missing for three and one-half years or more, which is longer than any man was held prisoner in all of World War II.
- The Communists have refused to permit inspection of its POW camps by the International Committee of the Red Cross; this organization regularly inspects POW camps of the South Vietnamese. An East German team of journalists were permitted to compile a picture report of conditions in a North Vietnamese prison but little credibility is given to their report; Averell Harriman denounced the report as a "travesty." If the North Vietnamese have nothing to hide, why don't they permit inspection of their POW camps by impartial organizations?

It is clear that North Vietnam, as a signator of the Geneva Convention, is bound by its provisions. The International Red Cross has taken the position that although the Viet Cong is not a signator of the Convention, it is still bound by it since both North and South Vietnam are parties to the Convention. Legal arguments aside, it should be clear that both the Viet Cong and the Pathet Lao are subject to the general principle of international law regarding humanitarian treatment of POW's.

Often overlooked is the fact that the South Vietnamese have lived up to the Geneva Convention with regard to prisoner treatment. Today the South Vietnamese hold some 32,000 North Vietnamese and Viet Cong POW's in six POW compounds.

These facilities are inspected regularly by the International Red Cross. The men are allowed to write their families—in fact many have regular visits from their families at the POW compound.

The Communists have repeatedly indicated that they are providing humane treatment for American POW's. The evidence indicates otherwise. We know that men have been held in isolation for prolonged periods of time. There have been instances of broken bones being rebroken, fingernails removed, medical attention denied and proper diets ignored. At least 19 American POW's have either been murdered by the Communists or allowed to die from malnutrition and disease.

Secretary Resor Notes Vietnamization Progress

(This is the second of a two-part series on Vietnamization by Secretary of the Army Stanley R. Resor. In last week's Commanders Digest the Secretary outlined his views on the situation in Southeast Asia, noting that Vietnamization is more than a military program. This portion of excerpts from Secretary Resor's address to members of the Chicago Chapter, Military Order of World Wars cover the United States' basic policy of Vietnamization and gives examples of progress.)

The military aspect of Vietnamization depends first of all on engaging the enemy main forces and holding them away from the civilian population. Our strategy calls for the Vietnamese progressively to take over this combat role. And as the Army of the Republic of Vietnam, or ARVN, has gained in capability and confidence, it has in fact taken over more and more of this mission, replacing United States Forces.

Behind this shield provided by the regular units, the territorial forces, called the Regional Forces (RF) and Popular Forces (PF), have the mission of providing security for the provinces and villages. The RF operate throughout a province, the PF units work within districts. Militarily, they play a vital role in two respects. They root out the Viet Cong, isolate them in relatively unpopulated areas, and spread the security of the South Vietnamese Government throughout South Vietnam. At the same time by taking over the task of local security, they free more ARVN units to confront enemy main forces.

One of the most encouraging developments in the past year has been the improvement of the Regional Forces and Popular Forces in both quantity and quality. These improvements stem from three actions: first, better training in which a major role is played by teams of young American officers and noncommissioned officers; second, better equipment, including the M16 rifle; and third, President Thieu's personal commitment to upgrading these forces.

The improvements in the RF and PF have released 31 ARVN battalions from the pacification role. These, plus seven newly-activated ARVN battalions, have given us the equivalent of roughly three additional ARVN divisions. About 15 ARVN battalions are still on pacification duty and they are scheduled to be released in the foreseeable future.

In all we have encouraged and helped make it possible for the Vietnamese to expand their Armed Forces from 700,000 in April 1968 to more than 1,000,000 today, an increase of more than 40 per cent in two years.

A final significant force for internal security is the People's Self Defense Forces. This group was started in 1968 when the people of Hue, after the Tet offensive, asked their government for the opportunity to help themselves defend their homes.

The United States also provides more than 18,000 advisors who work on both the military and civil sides of Vietnamization. They assist the Vietnamese military and paramilitary forces at all levels to become self-sustaining. Advisors also help local government officials to build stable and coordinated governmental systems, advance agriculture, expand education, and whatever else is necessary to make the lives of the people more productive and secure.

VIETNAMIZATION—Trainees from ARVN's 26th Training Co., load and fire the M-60 machine gun.

I have been discussing the first part of the President's Vietnamization program—strengthening the Vietnamese forces. How well has it worked?

—We have withdrawn 115,500 men from Southeast Asia. This is a 21 per cent reduction in our troop commitment. More importantly, it is 30 per cent of our previous ground combat strength. By next May, an additional 150,000 will have been withdrawn.

—The South Vietnamese have assumed responsibility for 26 per cent of the tactical areas in which American troops operated. They include substantially all of the Mekong Delta, the Capital Military District, which includes Saigon, most of the Central Highlands and most of the areas bordering the demilitarized zone.

—The share of population considered secure from Viet Cong attack has grown from 29 per cent in December 1968 to more than 73 per cent on March 31, 1970. These figures are not absolute, of course, but they do indicate the trend toward an expanding area of security.

—We have turned over to the Vietnamese seven large installations no longer needed by our forces. For example, the former home bases of the U.S. 11th Armored Cavalry Regiment, the 1st, 4th and 9th Infantry Divisions and the 3d Marine Division now house Vietnamese units.

—As a direct result of the reduction of our forces and the turnover of ground combat, the number of United States casualties has been reduced by more than half between the first quarter of 1969 to the same period in 1970.

—From Fiscal Year 1969 to Fiscal Year 1970, the incremental cost of the war in Vietnam decreased by 19 per cent, from $21.5 billion to $17.4 billion.

—The withdrawal of an additional 150,000 troops in Fiscal Year 1971 will, of course, reduce the FY 1971 costs of the war significantly below those of Fiscal Year 1970.

—The deactivation of 2⅓ active Army divisions has lessened our requirement for manpower. Draft calls projected for the current year are only slightly more than half the level of those for 1969.

Today the South Vietnamese have more than one million

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Secretary Resor Notes Vietnamization Progress

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soldiers in the field, against an enemy force of about one quarter that size, including the elements in Cambodia. Moreover, the enemy is increasingly made up of North Vietnamese. They now comprise about 73 per cent, while the number of indigenous Viet Cong guerillas continue to decline.

With security thus being provided to a larger and larger portion of the country, what steps have the Vietnamese taken to build a stable nation?

Governmental reform has proceeded steadily. In the past three years the Vietnamese have adopted a new constitution, elected a president and national legislature and cast their votes in local elections. They have gone to the polls in 2,000 villages and 9,600 hamlets. Ninety per cent of Vietnam's villages and hamlets now have elected officials.

To meet the need for trained leaders and administrators, the South Vietnamese Government, with American support, established the National Cadre Training Center at Vung Tau. The Center trains village and hamlet officials, pacification teams, PSDF cadre, PF instruction cadre and village technical cadre. Approximately 25,000 Vietnamese are trained each year.

The development of representative governmental institutions has brought with it important changes of policy. In 1969 under President Thieu's invigorated land reform program, the government redistributed 146,000 acres, almost four times the amount distributed in 1968. Most significantly, the Vietnamese National Assembly passed a sweeping land reform statute which was promulgated by President Thieu March 26 of this year. The New York Times has called this law the most fundamental non-Communist land reform action of the 20th Century.

The new measure, called the Land-to-the-Tiller Law, provides for an end of tenant farming. It authorizes transfer of land from about 50,000 landowners who are not now cultivating it themselves to the tenants who are. Each tenant will receive up to 2.5 to 7.5 acres, depending on the region of the country. Excess lands will be redistributed to war widows, veterans, retired civil servants, and farm laborers. Compensation will be paid to all former owners.

How does the farmer get his produce to market? Roads and waterways are the primary means. The Vietnamese highway system includes 4,000 miles of national and interprovincial highways. One of the most important Army contributions to Vietnamization is directed toward upgrading or restoring about 2,300 miles of this major road system to a standard network of two-lane, all-weather paved surfaces.

Refugee resettlement has followed the securing and reconstruction of hamlets. In January 1969 the refugee population in South Vietnam was 1.3 million. As of March 30 only 324,000 were considered refugees. Most significantly, 488,000 of the refugees resettled in 1969 returned to their own villages.

The Chieu Hoi program grants amnesty to Viet Cong defectors. Under this program an average of almost 4,000 per month came over to the government in 1969. This was more than double the 1968 total.

Medical care and health facilities in the villages have been a pressing need. While the number of doctors available in the country is far below the requirement, ambitious efforts are underway to provide health care programs to every citizen. In a nation of 17 million people, 20 million smallpox, cholera and plague immunizations were administered in 1969 compared with 16 million the previous year.

VIETNAMIZATION-MEDIC STYLE—Second Lieutenant Nguyen Dang Minh of the Republic of Vietnam Air Force explains use of medicine to a Vietnamese housewife as U.S. Air Force Major James W. Zimmer observes.

To provide an education to as many Vietnamese children as possible, impressive strides have been made in educational facilities. Despite the war and the underdeveloped nature of the country, 80 per cent of the school age children, are enrolled in public and private elementary schools.

I do not mean to suggest that we face no problems. What I am saying is that the program is well underway, and that the achievements to date are encouraging.

The military threat is still significant. The enemy, although weakened, still has the capability to mount major attacks, although at considerable cost to himself. Even though the South Vietnamese forces are now substantially large enough to defend their country, we still need the time for them to improve in quality, training and leadership.

This is why the limited action in Cambodia has been important to the Vietnamization effort. The weapons captured in Cambodia are enough to equip 16-20 enemy battalions.

This capture of arms and supplies has hindered major enemy attacks across the border and will help provide the time needed for Vietnamization.

Economically, Vietnam is faced with the problems which inevitably beset a country at war. Although the record so far has been better than that of South Korea during the Korean War, inflation remains a very serious threat. It has unsettled the Vietnamese economy, and revenue collections have not been sufficient to meet expenditures. These problems must be controlled by the Vietnamese government if that nation is to be self-sufficient.

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